

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for distributing and displaying advertising in

2 theatres, comprising:

3 an advertising server having a database of advertisements;

4 a plurality of geographically distributed displays, associated

5 with a corresponding plurality of theatres and coupled via a

6 network to said advertising server; and

7 a distribution controller, associated with said advertising

8 server, that causes selected ones of said advertisements to be

9 communicated from said advertising server via said network and

10 displayed in said theatres on said plurality of displays.

2. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality

of displays include video projectors adapted to display

advertisements on corresponding movie screens of said theatres.

3. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality

2 of displays include video monitors adapted to display

3 advertisements in common areas of said theatres.

4. The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said

2 advertisements are selected from the group consisting of:

3           static,  
4           picture-in-picture,  
5           audio,  
6           animation,  
7           multi-segment, and  
8           full-motion video clips.

5.     The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality  
2     of geographically distributed displays each comprise a local  
3     storage unit that locally stores said selected ones of said  
advertisements.

6.     The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said  
2     distribution controller comprises a reporting module that maintains  
3     a distribution history for said selected ones of said  
advertisements.

7.     The system as recited in Claim 1 wherein said  
2     distribution controller comprises a copy module that allows remote  
3     advertisers to provide new advertisements to said database.

8. A method of distributing and displaying advertising in

2 theatres, comprising:

3 storing a plurality of advertisements in a database of  
4 advertisements associated with an advertising server;

5 coupling a plurality of geographically distributed displays,  
6 associated with a corresponding plurality of theatres, to said  
7 advertising server via a network; and

8 causing selected ones of said advertisements to be  
9 communicated from said advertising server via said network and  
10 displayed in said theatres on said plurality of displays.

11. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality  
12 of displays include video projectors adapted to display  
13 advertisements on corresponding movie screens of said theatres.

14. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality  
15 of displays include video monitors adapted to display  
16 advertisements in common areas of said theatres.

17. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said  
18 advertisements are selected from the group consisting of:

19 static,

20 picture-in-picture,

5           audio,  
6           animation,  
7           multi-segment, and  
8           full-motion video clips.

12. The method as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality  
2       of geographically distributed displays each comprise a local  
3       storage unit, said method further comprising locally storing said  
4       selected ones of said advertisements.

13. The method as recited in Claim 8 further comprising  
2       maintaining a distribution history for said selected ones of said  
3       advertisements.

14. The method as recited in Claim 8 further comprising  
2       allowing remote advertisers to provide new advertisements to said  
3       database.

15. A system for distributing and displaying advertising in

2 theatres, comprising:

3 a computer network;

4 an advertising server having a database of advertisements and

5 coupled to said computer network;

6 a plurality of geographically distributed displays, associated

7 with a corresponding plurality of theatres and coupled to said

8 computer network; and

9 an advertising controller, coupled to said computer network,

10 that:

11 allows advertisers to provide advertisements to said  
12 database,

13 allows said advertisers to specify distribution of said  
14 advertisements among said theatres,

15 causes selected ones of said advertisements to be  
16 communicated from said advertising server via said network and  
17 displayed in said theatres on said plurality of displays, and

18 maintains a distribution history for said selected ones  
19 of said advertisements to allow said advertisers to be charged  
20 for said distribution.

16. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said plurality

2 of displays include video projectors adapted to display

3 advertisements on corresponding movie screens of said theatres.

17. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said plurality

2 of displays include video monitors adapted to display

3 advertisements in common areas of said theatres.

18. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said

2 advertisements are selected from the group consisting of:

3 static,

4 picture-in-picture,

5 audio,

6 animation,

7 multi-segment, and

8 full-motion video clips.

19. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said plurality

2 of geographically distributed displays each comprise a local

3 storage unit that locally stores said selected ones of said

4 advertisements.

20. The system as recited in Claim 15 wherein said

2 advertising controller causes said selected ones of said

3 advertisements to be communicated from said advertising server

4 based on:

5 time of day,

6 day of week,

7 season,

8 movie screen sizes in said theatres, and

9 ratings of motion pictures playing in said theatres.